

Message Text

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ACTION VO-05

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: CVIS, ECON, ELAB, PINT, AF
SUBJ: TREND IN AFGHAN NON-IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANTS

1. IN THE PAST SEVEN DAYS, THE CONSULAR SECTION HAS REFUSED
TOURIST VISAS TO NINE APPLICANTS FROM LOGAR AND WARDAK, TWO
PROVINCES IN SOUTHEASTERN AFGHANISTAN.

2. AS THE EMBASSY NORMALLY DENIES VISAS TO FEWER THAN THIRTY
APPLICANTS IN AN ENTIRE MONTH, THE LARGE NUMBER OF REFUSALS
OF INDIVIDUALS FROM THOSE TWO PROVINCES MAY BE CONSIDERED
UNUSUAL. IT IS RARE FOR THE EMBASSY EVEN TO RECEIVE APPLICANTS
FROM THAT PART OF AFGHANISTAN.

3. ALMOST INVARIABLY, THESE APPLICANTS HAVE BEEN WITHOUT JOBS
FOR SOME TIME HERE IN AFGHANISTAN. ALL WERE PEASANTS, WHOSE PREVIOUS
EXPERIENCE HAD BEEN AS MENIAL LABORERS OR AGRICULTURAL
WORKERS. NONE WERE WEALTHY, EVEN BY AFGHAN STANDARDS. A FEW
CANDIDLY ADMITTED THAT THEY BORROWED MONEY TO PAY FOR THEIR TRIP
TO THE UNITED STATES. MANY CONFESSED THAT THEY HOPED TO FIND
WORK IN THE UNITED STATES, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL INDICATED THAT FOR THEM
THE U.S. WAS A SECOND CHOICE, THAT THEY HAD PREFERRED TO GO TO IRAN,
BUT THAT THE STIFFER VISA REQUIREMENTS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF
IRAN HAS INSTITUTED TOWARD AFGHANISTAN HAD DETERRED THEM.

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4. COMMENT: THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF VISA APPLICANTS FROM THESE
TWO PROVINCES IS STRIKING, ALTHOUGH WE SHOULD NOT WISH TO DRAW
TOO MUCH FROM IT. THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN
LOGAR AND WARDAK, AS THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ENDEAVORS TO EXTEND ITS
AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IN NEARBY PAKTIA PROVINCE,
THE GOVERNMENT HAS EXPERIENCED CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS ASSERTING
ITS CONTROL, AND HAS RESORTED TO MILITARY FORCE. IT MAY BE

THAT THESE VISA APPLICANTS ARE SEEKING TO LEAVE THE SCENE OF
MILITARY OPERATIONS. ALTERNATIVELY, THE DESIRE OF THESE
INDIVIDUALS TO LEAVE LOGAR AND WARDAK MAY BE MERELY A SIGN OF
ECONOMIC DISTRESS IN THAT REGION.

T -T
S ELAFWE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH FOR TRENDS IN APPLICATIONS

FOR NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS.
DUBS

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 4 AS RECEIVED.

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